

*W. J. Taschereau Esq. M. P.
Ottawa*

With the Authors Compliment

THE

PROTESTANT MINORITY

IN QUEBEC

IN ITS POLITICAL RELATIONS

WITH THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC MAJORITY

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

SIR ALEXANDER TILLOCH GALT, K.C.M.G.

BY

THOMAS WHITE, Jr.



MONTREAL:

DAWSON BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

1876.

PRICE: 10 CENTS.

Copies Mailed on Receipt of Price by Post.

BR575

Q3

W45

THE PROTESTANT MINORITY IN QUEBEC

IN ITS POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MAJORITY.

OTTAWA, 19th February, 1876.

THE HON. SIR A. T. GALT,

MY DEAR SIR ALEXANDER, — I have to thank you for the courtesy which prompted you to send me advance proof sheets of your letter, on the subject of "Civil Liberty in Lower Canada"; and I am prompted to reply to it in the present form, partly for the reason that the question is one which can be more satisfactorily dealt with in this way, and also for the reason that having been the immediate occasion of the delivery by Mr. Huntington of his now celebrated speech at St. Andrews, I may, without any charge of presumption, be permitted thus to deal with the issues arising out of that speech, and to the discussion of which your letter is directed.

The speech itself at the time of its delivery certainly did not seem likely to create the interest which has since been provoked by it. I arrived in the County of Argenteuil late on the Tuesday night of the week of nomination, and on the Wednesday attended a meeting which had been arranged for me, in the French section of the County, at which both political parties were represented. At that meeting I was compelled to listen to appeals against my candidature based upon my supposed fanaticism and bigotry as a Protestant. The electors were told that I had just been driven out of Montreal by the French Canadian electors notwithstanding a large Protestant majority in my favour, because I was intensely inimical to the

French Canadian race and the Catholic religion. They were reminded that I held prominent rank in a society condemned by the Church, and that I was on this account unworthy of Roman Catholic support. I learned that, while this description of attack was being used among the French electors, in the Protestant sections of the County, I was denounced as priest-ridden, as the intimate personal ally and friend of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal, and as a member of a society of Lay Jesuits whose object was to hand over the Protestants of the Province to the tender mercies of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy. The electors were assured, on the authority of a gentleman who professed to know, that my office in Montreal literally swarmed with Roman Catholic priests, and that, therefore, no sound Protestant could vote for me.

The following day I had the pleasure of being met by Mr. Huntington at a meeting at St. Andrews. In the course of my speech, I complained of the tactics which were being pursued in the county, in appealing to the religious rather than the political sentiment of the people, illustrating my complaint by the facts I have just mentioned. And it was in reply to this part of my address, that Mr. Huntington made the speech which has since caused so much discussion. At the time it seemed nothing more than a clever attempt, in an intensely Protestant, and hitherto Conservative constituency, to secure an electoral triumph by rousing the Protestant sentiment of the people against one, against whom the Catholic sentiment had already been so successfully raised in another place; and those who listened to it certainly attached no greater importance

to it. It is evident, however, that it was intended to inaugurate a new departure in the politics of the Province. Mr. Huntington's reply to me occupied an hour in the delivery. It dealt with general questions of public policy, and was a defence of the government of which he is a member, against the charges on which I had ventured to arraign them. That defence, certainly, possessed an interest beyond the meeting to which it was addressed. And yet, although he was accompanied by a reporter, not a word of the speech, except the introductory passages which are now so famous, was reported. That fact, with the letter you have now given to the public, makes it evident, as I have said, that a new departure in politics has been resolved upon, and that a new ground of division, a purely religious one, is to be urged upon the people of the Province of Quebec. And this being the fact, I hope you will permit me to examine the reasons which prompt you to urge the "disruption of our former party alliances" and the union of Protestant-Conservatives with those whom you describe as "the so-called Liberal-Catholics."

If the position of the Protestants in this Province, is at this moment a hazardous one, as you almost assert, there is no public man upon whom the responsibility of that position rests more heavily than upon yourself. When the federal union of the Provinces took place, and I believe you have the honor of having been among the earliest of our public men to urge that union on the floor of Parliament, you were specially charged with the duty of protecting the interests for the future of the religious minority of the Province. In the performance of that duty, as you

have more than once stated, you had the hearty sympathy and support of the French Canadian Conservatives. In what way have the guarantees which you then secured been infringed upon or even threatened? No change has taken place, or been attempted, in the basis of representation then provided. No suggestion even has been made that our educational privileges should be in any way lessened or impaired. The legislation of last session at Quebec, on the School question, to which you refer as "not re-assuring," ought, so far as the Protestant minority are concerned, to have the directly opposite impression upon our minds. It is true that in so far as it affected Catholic education, it placed it "wholly under the control of the Clergy." I regret, as much as you can possibly do, that this should have been done, looking at the question from my Protestant stand-point. But it should surely not be forgotten that that Act passed the Legislature without challenge from either side of the House, and that it affords no ground for a "disruption of our former party alliances," seeing that both parties among the Roman Catholic members gave to it their full assent. But what is important for us to know is that Protestant education was placed as completely under Protestant control as was Roman Catholic education placed under Roman Catholic control. I think I am right in saying that every suggestion offered by the Protestant members of the Council of Public Instruction was embodied in the Act. That is a fact to which I venture to think you cannot find a parallel in the educational legislation of any other country in the world. Thus secured in our own fullest rights of control over the education of

our children, it is certainly not reasonable that we should demand the right to interfere with the wishes of the religious majority, especially when no representative of that religious majority in Parliament asks our interference, and no Catholic minority out of Parliament protests against the legislation.

You admit that at the date of Confederation "appearances justified great confidence in the liberal and generous action of the French Canadian majority; that politically they had been for many years under the leadership of men of known and tried liberality." And you give the names of Lafontaine, Morin, and Cartier, as "names synonymous with upright dealing and evenhanded justice, irrespective of race or religion." Lafontaine, Morin and Cartier, owed the large following among the Roman Catholics that they enjoyed, to the hearty sympathy of the Catholic clergy. They were as violently, nay, more violently attacked, because of the alliance with the church, than are the Conservatives of to-day. It is surely not necessary to refer to the writings in *L'Avenir* and *Le Pays* in order to establish this fact. It is surely not necessary to refer to the great Protestant agitation under the leadership of Mr. Brown in Upper Canada, in order to prove it. The subserviency of those statesmen to the Roman Catholic Hierarchy was the daily theme of the articles in a portion of the Liberal press during those years.* It is only necessary

* "Are we to suffer one-half of this fair portion of our country to meet the fate of Spain, of Italy, of Romish Switzerland and Germany—of every country where Popery has obtained undisputed mastery, where the lands have fallen under the control of the monastic establishments, where the priest has controlled education and every public enterprise, through the wealth which has been thrown into their hands?"—*Globe*, October, 1852.

"The Reserve question is an important issue—it is a great branch of the

to refer to Mr. Huntington's speech, for which you invoke for him the thanks of the country, to prove it. That speech was a condemnation of twenty years of British Tory alliance with the ultramontane party, and these twenty years include the whole period of Sir George Cartier's official life. For ten of them, at least, you were yourself responsible, and your own testimony is sufficient to show how cruelly unjust was the charge that Protestant interests had in any way suffered by that alliance, for condemning which you

great issue of Church and State connection; but we are free to confess that infinitely greater in our view is the question, whether one-half of this magnificent country shall be surrendered to Roman priest-craft—whether Roman Catholic institutions, which have ground to the dust every country in which they have found a resting place, shall be fostered and extended by public aid?—whether by the treachery of place-hunting Protestants, be they Wig or Tory, the priests of Rome are to hold the balance of power in the united Province, and continue to mould the institutions of both sections to suit their purposes.”—*Globe, March, 1854.*

“Who then crouched before him and simpered at his nod? Not Canadians worthy of their name and privileges, but a handfull of priest-ridden politicians, and the unlettered peasants who dwaddle on their exhausted lands on the banks of the St. Lawrence. As for the intimate relations with Rome the writer (*La Patrie*) is jubilant about them. ‘Intimate relations’ with Rome forsooth! Already our relations have been so intimate that, for two centuries the Lower Canadian portion of the population have scarcely advanced one iota; so intimate that the same population leaves a dead weight on our present prosperity; so intimate that its priests sway our paltry politicians.”—*The Globe, December 1855, on the visit of Pope's Nuncio, Archbishop Bedine.*

“These thoughts are well worthy the serious consideration of the honest members of the Orange body. That a large majority of that body are firm Protestants, we never doubt; but that the whole body, through the treachery of a few unprincipled leaders, are now aiding and abetting that very system to which they profess to be opposed, is as manifest as that the Ministry hold their offices by and with the consent of the Romish party of Lower Canada AND DARE NOT REFUSE TO DO THEIR BIDDING.”—*Globe, March 12, 1857.*

In the *Globe*, August 20, 1857, the French Canadian Conservatives under Mr. George E. Cartier, were described as “THE POPE'S BRASS BAND.”

“Here is the issue presented to the people of Toronto! Mr. Bowes gets the Roman Catholic votes, and they will elect him! Protestants of Toronto, will you stand idly by and see this done? Will you be ruled by the petticoated gentlemen of Church street, or will you not unite on two men who can beat Bowes, and put them in?”—*Globe, December, 1857.*

“It is George Brown that Priest Bruyere hates; it is he that the priest wished to drive from the polls. And will Protestants of Toronto endure to be represented by the nominee of a foreign priest?”—*Ibid.*

now ask us to record public thanks to the Postmaster General.

Where is the evidence of any change of policy towards the religious minority? What is there, either in the policy of the government of Quebec, or of the French Conservatives at Ottawa, to justify your implied charge that their conduct has been less "liberal and generous" or that they are less disposed towards "upright dealing and even-handed justice, irrespective of race and religion?" Sir George fought the liberals with certainly as much vigour and earnestness as either Mr. Masson or Mr. DeBoucherville; and he had the Clergy of the Roman Catholic Church as heartily with him in the fight, down to the last great struggle in which those liberals showed how little claim they have to the "disruption of our former party-alliances" in their interest, by, as you describe it, "the history of the Programme" and "their union with Bishop Bourget" to defeat him.* But that sympathy of the Church

* Just before the general elections of 1867, all the Roman Catholic bishops of the Dominion issued pastoral letters, or other letters which were intended to be used as episcopal utterances, in favor of the Government of which Sir Alexander Galt was a member. The Liberals had bitterly opposed Confederation, and were resolved, as shown by the result of a formal meeting held by them, to test the question at the polls with their conservative opponents by electing, if they could, anti-Confederationists. I was in this crisis that the pastoral letters were issued. It is only necessary to take extracts from those issued by the bishops in Lower Canada. The pastoral of the Archbishop of Quebec, which was ordered to be read and published in all the churches on the first Sunday or festival after its reception, had the following:—

"If, during the period of more than one century since our country was ceded to Great Britain, the form of Government has been at various times modified, we must remember that the principle of authority varies not, but is ever the same. Authority is necessary to the maintenance of human society, and experience proves to us now more than ever what misfortunes befall the nations who dare reject it.

"Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, the federal union just formed emanates from lawful authority; you will consider it as your law, and you will therefore submit to the will of God, accepting it with sincerity. It is, moreover, your interest, as well as a duty of conscience to do so, in order to promote the general prosperity and individual welfare. Shortly you will be called upon to select

with Lafontaine, Morin and Cartier, never prompted them to interfere with the rights of the religious minority, and never prevented them from according to that minority every demand they ever made upon them. In what way has this policy been changed by their successors? If I mistake not, you have yourself testified to the liberality of Mr. DeBoucherville in relation to his offer to make provision for a Lunatic Asylum for Protestants, in obedience to the request of

those members who, in the federal as in the local Parliament, will have to make the new constitution work its way. *You will, therefore, forbear giving your vote to those who might be inclined to oppose it, or to counteract its operation, but you will vote for persons well known as being desirous of promoting the greater good of the country.* What should reassure us, dearly beloved brethren, is that the new form of Government just given has been prepared with care by men well known for their patriotism as for the services they have rendered to their country."

The Bishop of Rimouski in his pastoral letter said: "In so solemn a moment the faithful naturally turn to the first pastors of the Church for advice and instruction. *We therefore believe that we are fulfilling one of the sacred duties of our calling in offering you advice which, as you have always done you will receive with respect and joy* In the approaching elections you will consider it an obligation of conscience to select with care those candidates who are to represent you, whether in the House of Commons or in the Local Legislature

. *They should pledge themselves to you that they will cordially and frankly assist in working out the new order of things; AND TO SECOND THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WHO WILL BE CALLED UPON TO INAUGURATE THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE NEW DOMINION.*"

The Bishop of St. Hyacinthe, in his pastoral letter said:—"We have lately had occasion to assert *from the pulpit of our cathedral*, a right which we dare not surrender; and which, with the grace of God, we shall fulfil as all our other duties; that is, *the right to instruct and direct you, in our capacity as you* BISHOP, in all matters that relate to social order, as well as those that appertain to religion Let us have none of those unfortunate divisions which have been so productive of evil. *None of those men who are only capable of embarrassing the progress of the country.* We require men of sincerity and loyalty—men whose intellect has been developed by a sound education; and above all, men who have evinced their liberality and attachment to religion and its principles; men without passion, who well understand our present political situation, and who will go to Parliament with a sincere and earnest disposition to give our new constitution a hearty support by speech, influence and practical work."

In order to give point to these extracts, and to show how strongly they were in favor of the Government of the day, of which Sir George Cartier and Sir Alexander Galt were both members, the following resolution adopted by the Reform Association of Lower Canada at the time will show:—"That in view of the approaching general election an Association be organized in each County or electoral college, composed of all those who are opposed to confederation, and that this Association have a committee in each Parish of the Country."

a meeting of Protestants, held in Montreal. I am aware that this offer has been cited as evidence of a deep seated conspiracy on the part of the Local Government to destroy Protestantism and Protestant rights in the Province of Quebec. But I do not suppose that you will admit either the justice or the wisdom of such a charge.

You refer to and quote the Pastoral letter of Monseigneur Bourget as a reason for the "disruption of our former party alliances." With that letter I have as little sympathy as you can possibly have. I venture to say that it meets with no sympathy from Protestants of either political party. But there is this to be said, that it is simply a strong illustration of the fundamental differences between the two systems of religious faith. Roman Catholicism denies to its membership the right of private judgment. Protestantism on the contrary is based upon that right as its leading and distinctive characteristic. Bishop Bourget is dealing with a class, who being Catholics, yet deny the absolute authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals, and these he condemns. That condemnation to Protestants would be simply intolerable; but it is neither intended to, nor does it, apply to us. In the recent debate in Parliament, from his own side of the House, Mr. Huntington's speech was condemned by every gentleman who spoke.* In the Catholic press

* "As to the second question—whether I approve of the speech, I have simply to say that I do not approve of anything that has a tendency to bring religion into public discussions in the politics of this country. . . . I can only therefore express my regret at the remarks of my hon. friend, Mr. Huntington, and the tone and interpretation given them by many. So far as that interpretation and tone are concerned, I have no sympathy with it."
—*Hon. Mr. Mackenzie, debate on the address.*

"The Hon. Postmaster General is evidently mistaken as to the meaning attributed to certain expressions used in this country. The words *Ultramon-*

of the liberal party, in the other Provinces, the same condemnation has been pronounced. In that portion of the Catholic liberal press of this Province, which, while condemning the unwisdom of that speech, has yet excused it, the excuse has been based upon the assumption that Mr. Huntington did not mean to assert any difference of opinion among Roman Catholics, as to the full and complete authority of their Church in matters of faith and morals. Mr. Power, in his letter to the Postmaster General, expressly denies any such difference of opinion among his co-religionists, and Mr. Huntington in his reply protests against any interpretation being put upon his speech as would imply that he asserted such a difference. Under these circumstances I cannot but think the publication by you, at this time, of your correspondence with Mr. Robertson is unfortunate. Your long experience in public life; your intimate acquaintanceship with the public men, especially of

tanism and Gallicanism, which belong to another epoch, have no longer their raison d'être, since Catholics, without exception, recognize the sovereign authority of Rome in matters of religion. But Catholic Liberalism, which is more modern, at least in name, is the affirmation of the right of discussion in the Church. But this doctrine, I, as a Catholic, ought to repudiate; and I do repudiate it with "all the solemnity and all the energy of which I am capable."—Hon. Mr. Cauchon, present leader of the French Liberals, in the debate on the Address.

"I say at once as an Irishman and a Catholic, that I do not concur in the remarks of the Hon. Postmaster-General, and I am obliged to say that it was a most unfortunate speech.—*Mr. Devlin, in the debate on the address.*

"My hon. friend from Terrebonne, has attacked the speech delivered in the county of Argenteuil by the Hon. the Post Master-General, which has become so famous during the past few weeks; and he regards this speech as inopportune, imprudent and dangerous; and I must say that I share this opinion with my honourable friend.—*Mr. Bechard, in the debate on the address.*

"I felt that this speech was a deadly blow at the existence and the very life of the party which I have spent my whole political life in endeavouring to build up and sustain according to the measure of my humble ability. . . . I have attained substantially the object I had in view; that the speech was condemned by the First Minister, and is condemned by all the supporters of the Government from the Province of Quebec."—*Hon. Mr. Holton, de'ate on the address.*

the Province of Quebec, must give great weight to any statement you make as to their opinions, and when you describe the liberals of the Province, with whom you now invite Protestant Conservative alliance, as that "section of the Roman Catholic party who do not accept the extreme views enunciated at Rome," you simply declare them to be non-Catholics according to the rule which, in the recent discussions, they have all claimed as binding, and you justify, if anything can justify it, the tone of Bishop Bourget's pastoral towards them.

By your silence at the last elections, after the assurances of Mr. Robertson's letter which you admit were "distinct enough as regards the Protestants," you admitted that there was no ground for the disruption of former party "alliances" at that time. I cannot but think it fortunate that you came to this conclusion. There can be no doubt that it would be a calamity, if in the Province of Quebec, the Catholic majority became so united as to practically exclude the Catholic minority from any share in the administration of public affairs. However gratifying such a condition of things might be from the stand point of mere party advantage, in the higher interests of the state it would be simply deplorable. And yet there can be little doubt that badly as that minority were beaten at the polls at the last election, they would have stood a fair chance of being literally swept out of Parliamentary existence, had one so intimate with them as you are, on the eve of the battle, called for Protestant union in their behalf on the ground that they were a "section of the Roman Catholic party who do not accept the extreme views enunciated at Rome."

At the time, they expressly repudiated such a position, and a Protestant manifesto, issued in their favour and based upon the supposed necessity of protecting them from their own church, must have proved a fatal blow to them.

It is no less a fatal blow to-day, and although it may be said that, as a Conservative, I should not complain of this, I do complain of it as certain to increase the power of the Roman Catholic Church in the ordinary civil and political administration of this Province, and to hand over the management of its affairs more exclusively to the Catholic majority. If it be true as you suggest, "that a deep laid plan exists for the complete subjugation of Lower Canada to ecclesiastical rule, with the view of extending the same baneful influence, hereafter, to the whole Dominion," I can imagine no means more likely to aid this design, at least so far as the Province of Quebec is concerned, than the declaration that there is a minority among Roman Catholics who do not accept the doctrines of Rome, and a call to union among Protestants to aid them in their crusade against the authority of their own Church.

So far as the records of the legislation of the Province since Confederation enable us to judge, there is no such difference between the parties as you describe, and, therefore, no such difference as justifies you in calling for the "disruption of former political alliances" in the Province of Quebec. I have studied this subject from this point of view with some care, and I venture to assert that you can find no single measure affecting the Roman Catholic Church, or in which that Church could be supposed to have even a remote inter-

rest, upon which there has been a division in the Legislature. There have been measures whose passage I, for one, deeply regretted. There have been some in which I stood alone among the English journalists of this Province in condemning at the time, and my condemnation of which has since been held by so-called liberal French journals as sufficient to justify my exclusion from Parliament. But there has been no division among the Roman Catholic members of the House. Within the last half dozen years the so-called Liberal party have been more submissive in their attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church, and more bold in their claim for the support of that Church, than any political party hitherto existing in Canada. The formation of the *Parti National* was an act of submission to the Church such as no other party has ever exhibited. Its single design was to present a new party to the country, free from the odium which attached to the Rouges, and accepting to the full "the extreme views enunciated at Rome." Their submission to the Programme of 1871, and "their union with Bishop Bourget to defeat Sir George Cartier," you acknowledge in your pamphlet. In the elections of 1872, while their allies in Upper Canada were appealing to the Protestants in the name of vengeance upon the murderers of Scott, they appealed in this Province to the Catholic sentiment against the Government, because Riel and his associates had not been amnestied. Even on the subject of the new educational bill, which you condemn so strongly, you will remember that that measure, or one resembling it, except in this that it placed the power in educational matters more completely under

the control of the church, was submitted to the legislature by Mr. Ouimet, when he was first minister, and one of the charges made against the Conservatives by the liberal press, was that they had failed to pass it. At the recent elections for the local legislature, Mr. Joly in his speech at the famous meeting of the chieftains at St. Croix, gave in what can only be regarded as complete submission to the "extreme views enunciated at Rome," emphasizing the submission by making it the prominent declaration in his statement of the views and intentions of his party.* And during the last session of the legislature, simultaneously with the accession of Mr. Cauchon to the leadership of the liberals of the Province, the party met in Quebec, and formally deposed Mr. Joly from the leadership in the legislature, on the sole ground, there is too much reason to believe, that he was a Protestant. Is that a record which entitles you to ask, for "the disruption of former party alliances" and the union of Protestant Conservatives, in their character as Protestants, with the Liberals of this Province?

Any one reading your pamphlet would be inclined to infer that the influence of the Church upon the po-

* "I maintain that no difference exists at the bottom, in the Province of Quebec, between its people. * * * It is not as it is in France, which is stained with the blood of the *Rouge* party; we have really no *Rouges* in this sense; and in the name of the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec, for whom I have a right to speak to-day—for I am its leader—I repulse with indignation these accusations made against us; and I say that it is cowardly to make them. * * * We are made responsible for writings of twenty years ago, and this is the responsibility which I deny. I am the leader of the Liberal party, and speaking rightfully as such, I repudiate all that is said in the name of the party which could wound the heart of a French Canadian, or of any other man. * * * It is unjust to make the party responsible for what members of the party wrote twenty years ago, or twenty days ago, or twenty hours ago in the newspapers."—*Mr. Joly's speech at St. Croix.*

litics of the Province, was preventing the representation of the Liberals in Parliament. You can hardly, however, forget that the Province has, since the coalition of 1854, been conservative. During nearly the last quarter of a century, the Liberals have never been as strong in Parliament as they are to-day. During the years in which you held a high position in the Government of Canada, they never were so strongly represented. Had they been, the party with which you acted could not have retained office. I submit this fact as an evidence that, by the only test which can be applied to a subject of this kind, there is no greater ground for urging Protestant support to the Catholic minority at this time, than there has been at any time during the last quarter of a century. Indeed, during the earlier part of that period, there was much greater ground, for there was in those days a Catholic minority which could, by its public utterances, be described as that "section of the Roman Catholic party who do not accept the extreme view enunciated at Rome." The union which you urge to-day was urged with equal vehemence by Protestant Liberals in the Province of Quebec, during all the years that you were in the Government; and it was urged with much greater vehemence by the Liberals of Ontario, the writings of some of whom, in their apparent dread of that "complete subjugation of the country to ecclesiastical rule," bear a striking resemblance to the views which you have now given to the public.

I am unwilling even by suggestion to assume that your pamphlet has been issued in the interests of a political party, with which, although you acted with

it, against Sir George Cartier, to whose liberality you now bear so warm and so justly merited a testimony, during the later years of your Parliamentary life, you have not hitherto been supposed to have much sympathy. Yet it is impossible to avoid the feeling that there is at least some significance in the time and the occasion of this new departure. Two years of official life have done much to discredit the party now in office in Canada. The evidences of this are to be found not only in Quebec but in Ontario as well. The "Conservative reaction" of which so much has been said lately, has been quite as apparent in Ontario as in Quebec. It can hardly in the former Province be attributed to the undue interference of the clergy in political contests. And there is no reason for supposing that to that influence it is alone due in the Province of Quebec.* Your own observation in Montreal, must have convinced you that it is due to an intelligent appreciation of the failure of the gentlemen now in office, to meet the expectations which the public, on their own professions, had formed of them. It is certainly a little remarkable that at a moment when, not in one Province alone, but throughout the entire Dominion, there is a growing change of sentiment against this Government, arising out of their political

* "As a Conservative, and as an Ultramontane,—or, as I am called by the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House from the Province of Quebec, as the leader of the Ultramontanes, I say that the Conservatives of the Province of Quebec—and I speak advisedly—are ready to give to the clergy of the Province, in religious questions, that submission and that confidence which according to our creed we are obliged to give to them; and regarding questions relating to the material progress of the country, and the political affairs of the country, we are ready, and shall always be ready, to give to the opinions of these gentlemen that respect to which they are entitled, owing to their high intelligence, their great virtue, and their disinterestedness; but we are not ready to give any more."—*Mr. Masson's speech on the address, 11th February, 1876.*

action, an attempt should be made to arrest that current of sentiment by appeals to the religious feelings of the people. With all respect for the high position which you occupy in the public mind, I venture to think that the Protestant Conservatives of Quebec will require some greater evidence that their rights are in danger, than your manifesto presents, before they will consent to close their eyes to the political issues which divide political parties, in the interests of that one of those parties with which they have no political sympathy.

The Protestant minority in the Province of Quebec have had no reason up to this time to doubt the liberality and fairness of the majority in all matters affecting their interests. The guarantees which you secured for them at the time of Confederation remain to this day intact. No suggestion has ever been made looking to their abrogation. No request made by Protestants has ever been refused. A mere handful in the Legislature, although nearly three times as many as, by the strict division of Roman Catholic and Protestant, they could secure, they had the most absolute and entire control over every interest specially belonging to them and subject to the action of the Legislature. Their position certainly cannot be benefitted by any attempt at political organization based upon religious opinions such as you suggest. With the family quarrels of the majority, they have nothing to do, and their best interest will be secured by preserving that position of neutrality which has hitherto marked their conduct. The large divisions among the Roman Catholic population are to them proof enough that political activity is as great among that population as among Protes-

tants. If indeed there was a minority of the Roman Catholics, struggling manfully for some principle—say for the complete separation of church and state in the Province, against the majority, and if they appealed to Protestants to support them in their struggle, I can quite understand that the appeal would be a difficult one to resist. But there is no such party. The liberals with whom you invite an alliance have never presented since confederation, any issue which entitled them to our support because of it. And if it be urged that at least they are opposed to the interference of the clergy in politics, I answer that their opposition is, by your own admission, insincere, that they have shown themselves quite ready to reap the benefit of such interference, and that the interference of the clergy is only condemned by them, when it is exercised in the interest of their opponents.

The time may come in the Province of Quebec, although I venture to predict that if it should ever come it will not, judging by the past, be during the reign of the Conservative party, when Protestant interests may be put in jeopardy. If that day ever comes, I am sure that it will not be necessary for you to “once more enter the arena of political strife to “protect those interests” which you are “so responsible for creating.” The Protestants of this Province will in such an event be found to be a unit, and, having the constitutional safeguards which you provided in the Act of Confederation at their backs, will have no difficulty in maintaining the rights thus accorded to them. But the suggestion of such a coming struggle, above all the most unhappy suggestion that the struggle may assume the character

of "a physical contest," is utterly unwarranted in the face of the history of the past, to which you yourself make such generous reference. The position of the Protestant minority in Quebec is one surrounded by some difficulty; but, as yet, there is nothing to indicate that it is one of danger. Their true interest, I venture to think, is to keep a strict watchfulness over their own rights, to be ever ready to maintain them, if they should be attacked, and to preserve towards the religious majority a position of absolute neutrality, in so far as the religious disputes of that majority are concerned. They should observe this course in the interest of good government. If the Roman Catholic Church is intolerant of dissent among its own membership from any of its pretensions however extreme and to our minds presumptuous, every appeal such as that addressed by you can but increase the influence of those pretensions and render more powerless any resistance to them. With an abstinence from interference in those disputes, and continuing our alliances on political grounds alone, the Protestants of the Province will best maintain their own rights, and most certainly minister to the best interests of the state.

I am, Sir Alexander,

Yours very truly,

THOS. WHITE, JR.